

Process Paper National History Day

Upon entering a state of isolation named “Sakoku” in 1639, the Japanese Government eliminated communication with the rest of the world in order to abolish the influence of other countries and religions. Finally, the end of Sakoku came in 1853 when Commodore Matthew Perry led an expedition to Japan in an attempt to open them to trade, this expedition was challenging and had even failed once, but Japan later agreed to the demands of the US, by signing a treaty. Despite the opposition of these edicts by many Japanese, this event eventually proved to make Japan the more stable, modern, and independent country it is today. Sakoku was a major event that heavily impacted Japan in ways that could be described as good or bad depending on where you stand. It came to our attention that not many people we knew spoke of this topic so we wanted to learn more. We thought it was pretty important considering the entire country went into isolation for over 210 years. Not only that but they were mostly dependent on themselves, minus five trading entities. The isolation had an immense impact on their culture

because they didn’t have any influence (that was actually the reason for the isolation) Due to Sakoku lasting from 1633 to 1853, all the sources we found were secondary and online. When we went to the Delano library we were able to use a website called Gale in Context to find reliable websites. Before we learned more about Sakoku we thought Japan was completely isolated and did not get any knowledge or resources from the outside world. Now, after doing more research, we now know they had traded with China and the Netherlands.

As we were doing our research we realized that our original desire of making a documentary was not likely. We had absolutely nothing in terms of video footage in our research. So we came together and decided that we were going to do a website. This seemed fitting for our topic because we had a lot of information that could not be fit on an exhibit board but a performance just wouldn’t work at all for us. We have learned a lot during this project. We never knew how to create a website or a hanging indent before this.

Another reason we chose this project is because of its strong relation to the theme this year. It relates to the theme (communication in history) because it shows lack of communication. When we chose this topic we were surprised at how little people had heard of it, even though it was a huge chunk (200 years) of our world’s history. This instance was displayed again during our research. There were barely any books on the topic, and even when there were books they were inaccessible to us. I think this topic should be more known throughout the world. Because it had a huge impact on our world.